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World Economic and Social Survey 2014/2015: MDG Lessons for Post-2015

Overview*

* The present overview summarizes the key findings and detailed analyses, including references, presented in the six chapters of *World Economic and Social Survey 2014/2015*.

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Summary

In response to the fact that the period of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is coming to a close and that global leaders are expected to launch the post-2015 development agenda, along with the sustainable development goals (SDGs), in the latter part of 2015, the *World Economic and Social Survey 2014/2015* offers an analysis of the broad policies and strategies adopted and implemented to achieve the MDGs in order to draw necessary lessons for the achievement of the SDGs.

The *Survey* uses a multidimensional analytical framework to capture the MDG lessons in the areas of economic, social and environmental policies, as well as national adoption of global goals, governance and institutions, peace and stability, global cooperation for achieving development goals, and data development.

The *Survey* shows that the adoption of global development goals by national Governments is the important initial step towards achieving the goals, and it requires decisions by political leadership, legislative changes, consultation with stakeholders and advocacy, and incorporation of the global goals into national and subnational plans and budgets. The United Nations system can play a crucial role in assisting Member States as they engage in this process.

A range of economic, social and environmental policies are found to have been crucial for achieving the MDGs through either their direct influence on specific goals and targets or their indirect effects on creation of the necessary enabling conditions. Going forward, some of these policies will have to be adjusted to the much broader scope of the SDGs, and a key challenge will be to integrate them in order for balanced progress to be made along the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Good governance, effective institutions, peace and stability are found to be both enablers and outcomes of development, and taking into account this interconnection will be of great importance for implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Last but not the least, various forms of global partnerships will have to be strengthened in order for the SDGs to be achieved. Most importantly, the "MDG spirit" of joining together for common development goals will need to be sustained.

Introduction

Launching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the dawn of the present century was one of the most important initiatives undertaken by the United Nations. It strengthened the connection between the fundamental values and principles of the United Nations and the development efforts of Member States, and enhanced the leading role of the United Nations in global development thinking and practice. As the MDG reference period ends in 2015, the world is ready to embrace the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

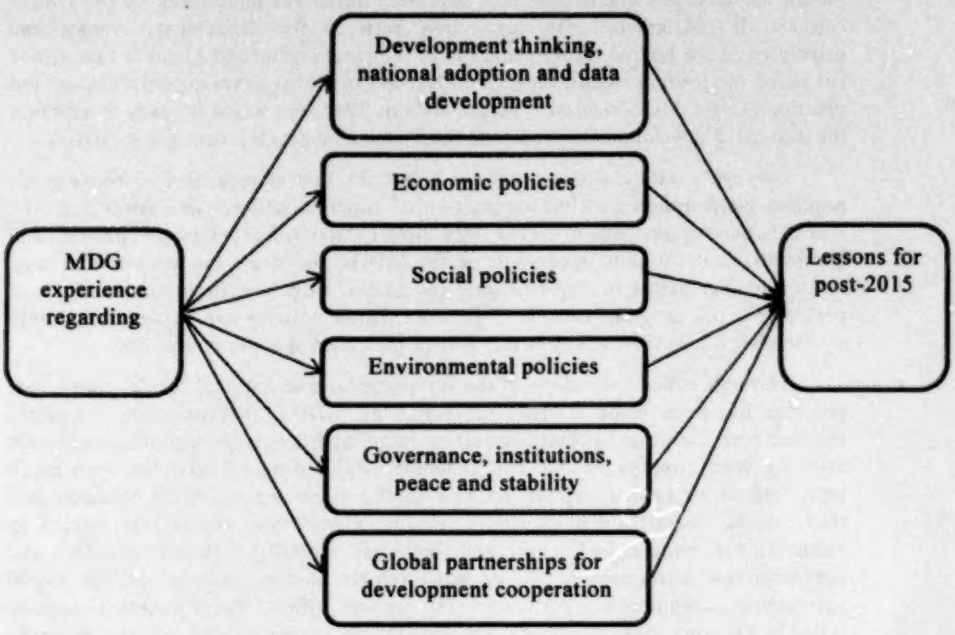
However, setting ambitious goals is but the first step: achieving those goals requires good design and implementation of concrete policies and strategies. The *World Economic and Social Survey 2014/2015* is intended to review the policies and strategies used for implementation of the MDGs and draw the lessons that may assist Member States in implementing the SDGs. However, its intention is not to prescribe a full range of post-2015 policies. Those policies can be developed only by Member States themselves in the light of their own specific conditions.

Through concerted efforts at the international and national levels, significant progress has been made towards achieving the MDGs.[1] For example, the world reached both the global poverty reduction target and the target regarding improved drinking water five years ahead of schedule. Major progress has also been made with respect to primary education and in the fight against AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. Nevertheless, shortfalls remain in achieving the targets related to reduction of hunger and child and maternal mortality, gender equality and environmental sustainability. Large gaps remain in the delivery of the global partnership commitments, particularly as regards official development assistance (ODA). Progress has also been uneven across countries and among different population groups and regions within countries.

As the impact of the MDGs has been multi-stage and multidimensional, the present *Survey* has adopted a multidimensional analytical framework, as presented in figure O.1. This framework provides a broader context for examining the MDG experience along its various dimensions and drawing corresponding lessons for the post-2015 period. It also reveals the connections between policies and outcomes.

[1] See *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015* for the official data regarding the achievement of the MDGs.

Figure O.1
A multidimensional analytical framework for reviewing the MDG experience and drawing MDG-related lessons



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

Lessons from the MDG adoption process

Implementation of the MDGs began with their adoption by national Governments, through an interaction encompassing the decisions of political leadership, legislative changes, consultation with stakeholders and advocacy, and incorporation of MDGs into national and subnational plans and budgets. In adopting MDGs at the national level, many countries also undertook some form of customization through addition of goals and targets, adoption of different time frames, and opting for a particular prioritization of goals. Many countries incorporated MDGs in their national visions, strategies and plans.

The MDG experience points to the importance of allowing countries to customize the global goals to match their individual settings. However, such customization needs to occur within a clearly formulated global framework, so that performance can be assessed and compared across countries and attainment of the global goals as the sum of national achievements can be assured.

Various initiatives by the United Nations played an important role in promoting national actions towards MDG implementation. These initiatives included the establishment of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators; the launching of the *Millennium Development Goals Report* to monitor progress; the convening of the International Conference on Financing for Development

(Monterrey, Mexico, 2002), the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa, 2002) and the 2005 World Summit (as follow-up to the Millennium Summit); the launching of the *MDG Gap Task Force Report*; and the convening in 2010 of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, which led to the commitment to MDG acceleration efforts. Horizontally, regional organizations, especially the regional commissions, undertook important initiatives to promote MDG-related efforts by the national Governments of countries in their respective regions, while vertically, many international specialized agencies and organizations undertook initiatives in their respective areas of activity, including the establishment of several special funds.

Lessons regarding economic policies

The effects of economic policies on the achievement of the MDGs are mostly disseminated through the broad impact of these policies on the overall efficiency, equity and stability of the economy. A key lesson entails the need for these policies to support the achievement of the MDGs through the promotion of a growth pattern that is sustained, inclusive and equitable. However, for attainment of the SDGs post-2015, the growth pattern has to become environmentally *sustainable*.

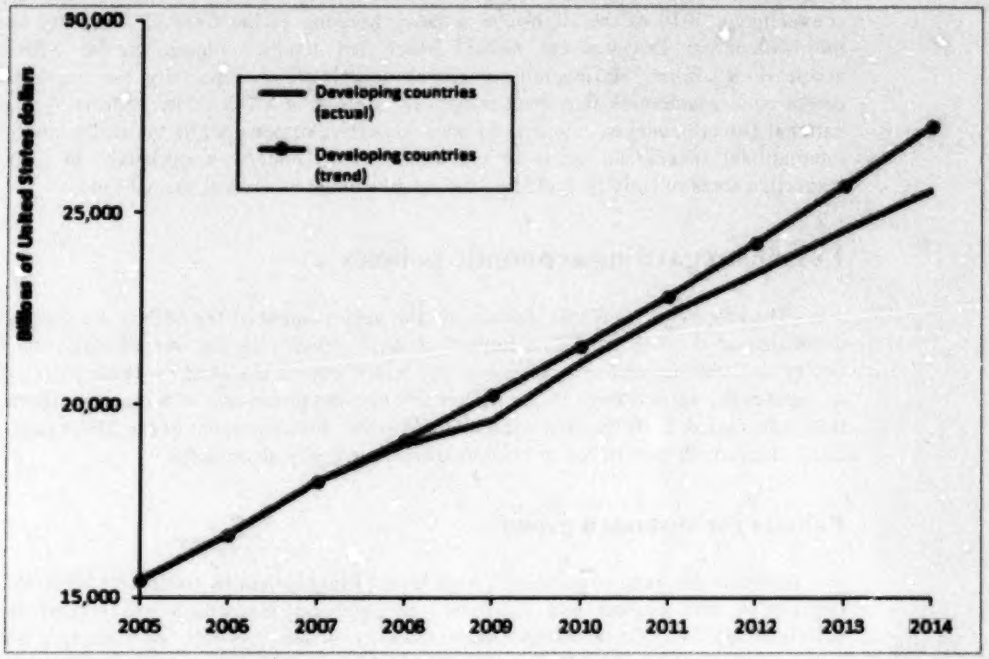
Policies for sustained growth

Policies designed to promote a high level of investment in productive capacity, improve human capital and facilitate technological innovation are crucial to sustained growth. Government needs to play a leading role in investing in infrastructure. While public-private partnerships can be harnessed to expand infrastructural investment, proper terms and regulations for sharing risks and profits should be well established. Policies supporting education and health are crucial to improving human capital, as economies with sustained growth have been found to usually spend at least 7-8 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in these areas. Appropriate industrial, trade and investment policy can facilitate technological innovation, which in turn can advance the productivity of both capital and labour, thereby generating additional growth out of existing resources and productive factors.

Macroeconomic policies aimed at maintaining broad macroeconomic stability are also crucial for sustained growth. Macroeconomic stability in most developing countries improved during the MDG period, compared with the decade of the 1990s: average GDP growth was considerably higher, with lower fluctuations; inflation moderated significantly; and the condition of both fiscal balance and public debt improved.

However, the eruption of the global financial crisis in 2008 significantly disrupted economic growth in many developing countries and set back progress towards the MDGs. Even by 2014, the total output of developing countries remained far below the trend line exhibited before the crisis, with a cumulative (2008-2014) gap in GDP of $1.7 trillion (figure O.2). The gap is about $250 billion (12.7 per cent) for Africa, equivalent to the size of total ODA flows to the region in the same period.

Figure O.2
GDP gap in developing countries in the aftermath of the global financial crisis



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

Maintaining broad macroeconomic stability requires effective policies in three areas, i.e., together, those policies should be capable of: (a) ensuring a structurally balanced domestic economy and averting high and escalating inflation, unsustainable public and private debt, boom and bust in investment, and high unemployment; (b) mitigating the impact of external shocks, generated by excess volatility in foreign capital flows, international prices of primary commodities, and exchange rates; and (c) preventing the frequent recurrence of international financial crises at the global level.

With respect to monetary policy, a large number of central banks in developing countries have adopted other policy targets besides maintaining relatively low and stable inflation, such as full employment and exchange-rate stability. Monetary policy instruments and targets for an economy need to be set in accordance with the stage of development of its banking and financial system and specific economic circumstances.

During the MDG period, an increasing number of developing countries have changed from pro-cyclical fiscal policies to counter-cyclical ones, by adopting several important measures, including fiscal rule, medium-term expenditure frameworks, and stabilization funds. However, the capacity for conducting counter-cyclical fiscal policy remains weak in least developed countries and other low-income countries.

Stabilization funds have proved to be an important tool for mitigating the effects of volatility in commodity prices. Further, capital-account management measures can to some extent contain volatile short-term capital flows. More generally, deciding when and how to open their capital and financial accounts remains a critical policy challenge for many developing countries. The countries with sustained growth, such as China, are displaying prudence and proceeding slowly in opening their capital accounts.

International policy coordination and reforms made in the international monetary system and international financial institutions are important for maintaining a stable international economic environment for developing countries.

Policies for inclusive and equitable growth

As labour earnings are the major sources of income for people in poverty, employment and decent wages are the two key requirements for achieving inclusive growth. Improving the business environment for enterprises and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises can boost labour demand. On the supply side, policies promoting education and training are crucial to improving workers' opportunities and income.

In the long run, increase in labour income depends on the growth in both employment and labour productivity. Policies promoting structural transformation of the economy are central to raising economy-wide labour productivity. Agriculture and informal off-farm services are the most poverty-reducing sectors, followed by construction and low-skilled manufacturing. By contrast, growth in less labour-intensive sectors, such as mining, exerts much smaller effects on poverty reduction.

Progress has been made during the MDG period in achieving gender and other types of equality in some countries, but significant disparities remain among different groups of people with regard to access to education, health, jobs and financial services. Moreover, income and wealth inequality has widened considerably in a large number of countries.

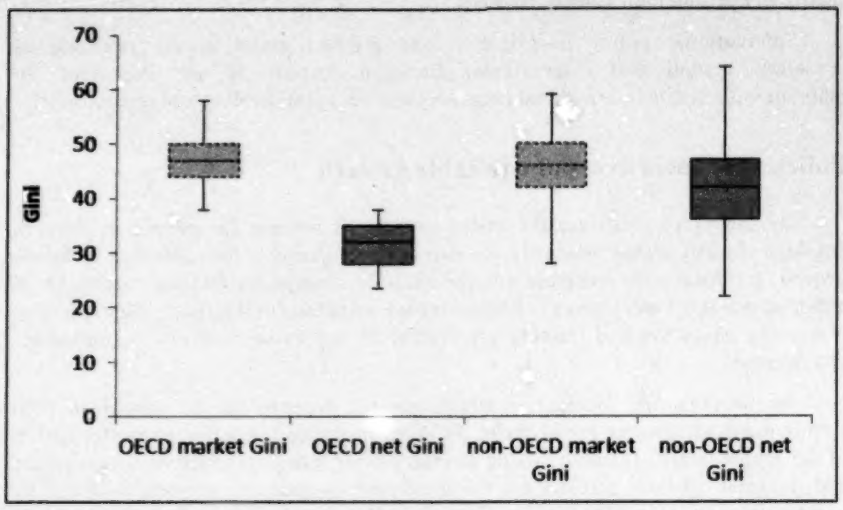
Policies designed to level the playing field for people, irrespective of their group identities, include those focusing on early childhood development, quantity and quality of schooling, skills training, social security, health, access to capital and land, the justice system, access to infrastructure and public services, and access to jobs and markets. For example, increasing women's access to employment can make growth more equitable and inclusive. Policies empowering women include those established to improve education and training, make tax rules more equitable, and promote men's roles as gender-equitable caregivers.

While improving equal access to capital and land is also important for making growth more equitable, design and implementation of policies in this area are more challenging. For example, addressing unequal land distribution can have far-reaching implications for improving social equity and economic efficiency, but significant hurdles remain on the way to implementing land reforms in many countries.

Progressive taxes and transfers can lower inequality. As shown in figure O.3, redistributive policies in developed countries reduce income inequality substantially. By comparison, the effects of government redistributive policies in

developing countries are still very limited because of their Governments' limited fiscal capacity.

Figure O.3
Redistributive effects in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries and non-OECD countries, 2000-2010



Source: Jonathan David Ostry, Andrew Berg and Charalambos G. Tsangarides, "Redistribution, inequality, and growth", IMF Staff Discussion Note, No. 14/02 (Washington, D.C., IMF, February 2014).

Social safety nets and social protection floors are also important in promoting inclusive and equitable growth (social policies are discussed at greater length below).

Transforming the MDG growth pattern for the SDGs

The general growth pattern observed during the MDG period is not sustainable. For instance, GDP per capita growth has been closely associated with an increase in carbon dioxide emissions, which is the main cause of global climate change. A positive correlation is found between economic growth and carbon emissions in many developing countries. Even in developed countries, the emissions increased when the growth rate rose beyond a certain level. More generally, environmental sustainability challenges, such as resource depletion, ecosystem degradation and climate change have undercut the hard-earned gains in economic and social development in many developing countries. Furthermore, people with low income are usually the most susceptible to the effects of environmental degradation.

The growth pattern of *sustained*, inclusive and equitable growth therefore needs to be transformed into one of *sustainable*, inclusive and equitable growth. Sustainable growth is growth that proceeds at a robust and stable pace, without compromising environmental sustainability for future generations.

An important step in effecting this transformation entails counting the full value of environmental resources in the measurement of national wealth. The 2012 System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), adopted by the Statistical Commission in its decision 43/105 (see E/2012/24, chap. I.B), needs to be further developed and mainstreamed. Second, given the "public good" status of many environmental goods and services, and the high degree of externalities involved, markets tend to underprice them significantly. Governments need to use taxes and regulations to rectify the distorted prices so as to incentivize businesses and consumers to move away from the current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. Third, building effective, inclusive, equitable and environment-protecting institutions is equally important. These steps may help transform many economic policies that promote sustained, inclusive and equitable growth into policies that support sustainable, inclusive and equitable growth.

Lessons regarding social policies

Social policies encompass a wide range of public interventions aimed at poverty reduction and improving social equality across different groups in such areas as health, education, human services and labour. In addition to fiscal measures, they include legislative measures and rights protection. Coordination and coherence among economic and social policies are important, as they do overlap.

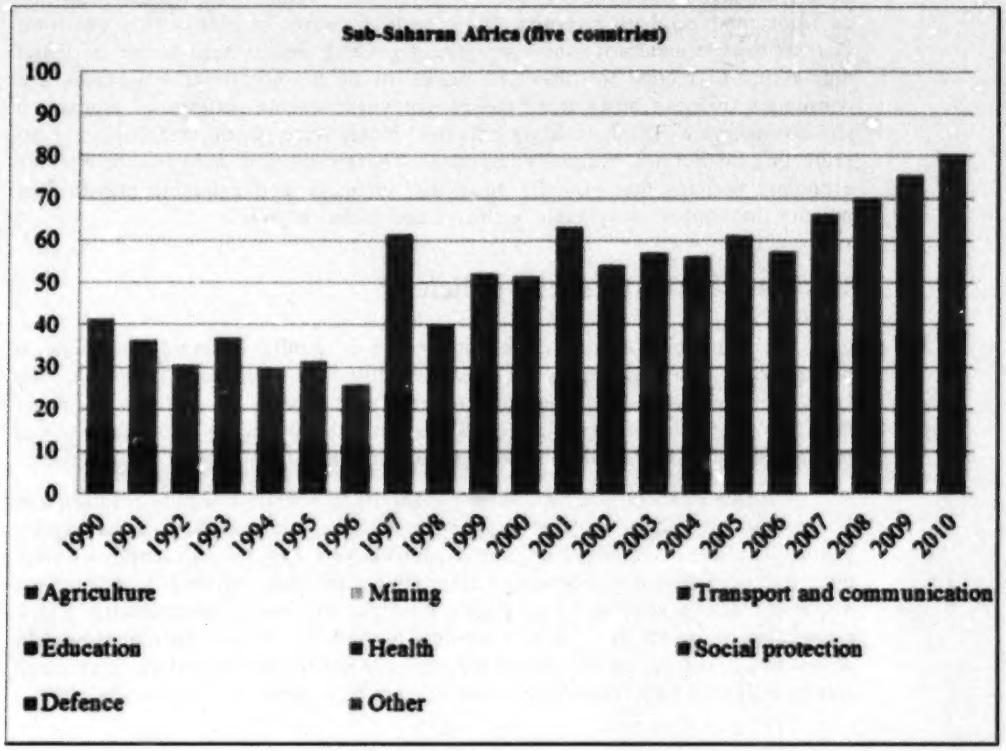
A subset of social policies, known generally as social protection policies, aim at ensuring a socially acceptable minimum standard of living for all, particularly for people who are unemployed or employed with very low wages, people who are unable to work owing to sickness or other factors and older persons, among others. Social protection policies in developed countries are mostly contributory, which means that recipients of benefits contribute partially or fully to their financing. In developing countries, on the other hand, they are mostly non-contributory, although employees in the formal sector are often covered by contributory schemes as well.

Increased social spending during the MDG period

The greater emphasis on social policies during the MDG period was manifested in higher spending on social protection, education and health. For example, in a group of sub-Saharan countries, the combined share of the above three sectors in total public expenditure increased from 28.4 per cent in 2000 to 31.4 per cent in 2010 (figure O.4).

Figure O.4
Sectoral decomposition of public spending during the MDG period in a group of sub-Saharan countries[a]

(Billions of 2005 purchasing power parity (PPP) dollars)



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, based on data from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) Statistics of Public Expenditure for Economic Development (SPEED).

[a] The group comprises Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria and Uganda, for which complete data were available for all years.

Local private sector spending also increased. More importantly, some parts of the external assistance to social sectors flowed through channels that remained outside the national budget, as has been true in some cases with several vertical health funds. The total expenditure on the social sectors was therefore greater than that presented in figure O.4.

The increased spending made public interventions possible both on the demand- and on the supply-side. However, some social protection programmes, such as workfare projects, could be helpful on both the demand side (by raising the demand for food, education and health) and the supply side (when, e.g., the goal of the project was the building of a local school).

Reducing poverty and hunger

Economic policies aimed at employment and income played an important role in reduction of poverty, as discussed above. However, various social protection policies played an important role as well. Often, they contributed, either by design or through spillover effects, towards achieving education-, health- and environment-related goals as well.

Particularly important among social protection policies were cash transfers, both unconditional and conditional. Conditional cash transfers require recipients to fulfil certain obligations, which can include sending children to school or visiting a health-care centre, thus enabling several MDGs to be achieved simultaneously. Other social policies for poverty reduction include subsidies, in-kind transfers and workfare programmes (mentioned above).

The MDG experience suggests that the evolution in the type of social protection policy that is suitable for a given country reflects the particular stages of its development. In this regard, low-income countries in general found unconditional cash transfers more useful, while many middle-income countries preferred conditional cash transfers.

Despite their beneficial impact, conditional transfers and other non-contributory social protection measures raise some issues, concerning, for example, financial sustainability, efficiency and the creation of perpetual dependency. However, since spending on social protection is still a small part of total public expenditure in most developing countries (averaging, for example, 14.2 per cent in 2010 in the five sub-Saharan countries whose data were utilized in figure O.4), the issue of financial sustainability may not yet be of acute significance. Indeed, one reason for the switch from unconditional to conditional cash transfers is to prevent the problem of perpetual dependency from arising by helping recipients build human capital and enter the labour market, thereby eliminating their need for non-contributory transfers in future. The gradual increase in the number of people moving from non-contributory to contributory schemes makes possible the transit to a universal social protection system with contributory schemes at its core. Furthermore, an increase in human capital is expected to lead, albeit with a certain time lag, to greater output, illustrating thereby the productive effect of social policies. With appropriate long-term planning, the issue of financial sustainability can thus be addressed.

Going forward, several measures can be taken to render social protection programmes more effective. For example, consolidation of various poverty-related social programmes into a single package can be helpful in standardizing practices, reducing duplication and preventing fraud. Focusing on the family rather than on the individual can help eliminate overlap, through utilization of complementarities among programmes directed towards different members of the same family. Creating the list of recipients online and using biometrics for identification purposes can help ensure recipient eligibility. Overall, non-contributory social protection schemes will continue to be important for the further reduction of poverty during post-2015, and many low-income developing countries will continue to need external support in order to administer these policies.

Achieving education goals

Expansion of physical facilities has played an important role in the progress made towards achieving universal primary education and other educational objectives. This expansion needs to continue in countries, particularly many least developed countries with high population growth and a lack of an adequate number of schools. The MDG experience suggests that in the context of infrastructure-building, more attention needs to be paid to issues of accessibility, sanitation facilities and gender parity.

Those who are still not enrolled in many countries, despite the progress made in terms of enrolment during the MDG period, belong generally to populations that are more difficult to reach, owing either to physical or to sociocultural/sociopolitical factors. If they are to be reached, both additional and new kinds of effort will be needed.

Progress in enrolment has to be matched by progress in completion rates. Further, quality of education must be ensured so that the literacy and numeracy of pupils who do graduate from primary school are at an adequate level.

A crucial requirement with respect to maintaining school quality entails the recruitment and retention of good teachers and ensuring that they remain motivated. In the long run, this in turn will require improving secondary and tertiary education and attracting qualified graduates, who are incentivized to teach in primary schools through better offers in terms of compensation, resources and career opportunities, and the promise of an environment conducive to effective teaching.

The MDG experience shows that waiving tuition fees, and providing free textbooks, free uniforms, and free breakfast and lunch are effective means of increasing enrolment, preventing dropping out, and improving students' learning experience. Reducing the opportunity cost of attending school by adapting the school schedule, calendar and location to specific circumstances is also important.

While enlisting local communities in all stages — extending from the decision-making associated with school construction to the monitoring and evaluation of teaching — has proved effective, this approach requires good community leadership. Expansion of early childhood development programmes was found to be effective in improving the performance of students once they enter school.

Since problems of both adult and child literacy still remain, particularly among rural women, better outreach to underserved populations will be necessary if further progress is to be made in this regard.

MDG experience points to the necessity of aligning expansion of education with expansion of employment opportunities. It is also important to note the time lags between educational investment and its benefit in the form of increased economic growth.

Promoting gender equality and empowering women

Considerable progress was made during the MDG period in achieving gender parity. A combination of legislative and non-legislative measures proved necessary to enhance gender equality, particularly with regard to property and family rights

and political participation. Further legislative measures are necessary to raise the quota of women in political representative bodies, in corporate boards and in other economic, political and social organizations. At the same time, attention needs to be given to the translation of formal declared rights regarding gender equality into actual practice, through appropriate enforcement and enshrinement of those rights in social conventions and norms of behaviour.

The MDG experience shows that as the different dimensions of gender equality are interlinked, it is necessary to make use of these interlinkages in achieving balanced progress. Among the different dimensions of gender equality, economic empowerment appears to have a central role. Women's participation in non-agricultural employment has increased during the MDG period. However, much more progress in this regard needs to be made post-2015. The contribution that women already make to household activities and agricultural production needs to be better recognized through the appropriate modification of national income accounting.

Achieving health goals

Considerable progress has been achieved in reducing child and maternal mortality and in confronting AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Both demand- and supply-side interventions were necessary to achieve the progress made. Table O.1 provides a summary of the health interventions that were widely used during the MDG period.

Table O.1
Widely used health policy interventions during the MDG period

Intervention	*Child mortality*	*Maternal mortality*	*HIV/AIDS*	*Malaria*	*Tuberculosis*
Immunization	Prevents deadly childhood diseases (diarrhoea, pneumonia, measles, tuberculosis, etc.)	Improves maternal health, boosts immunity in foetuses and reduces risks of complications			Prevents children from contracting tuberculosis
Access to safe water and basic sanitation	Influences nutritional status of child	Influences nutritional status of mothers		Attention to water systems can help to deal with malaria-breeding areas	
Early and exclusive breastfeeding	Improves nutritional status of child				
Micronutrient supplementation	Vitamin A (children) and supplements (women of reproductive age). Improves nutritional status of children	Weekly iron and folic acid supplements (WIFS), multiple micronutrient, balanced-protein energy. Improves nutritional status of women of reproductive age	Improves nutritional status of people living with HIV		
General nutrition strategies	Prevents stunting	Improves health of both mother and foetus			
Curbing household air pollution	Low-emission biomass chimney stoves and cleaner fuels help prevent pneumonia				Reduces risks of tuberculosis

Intervention	*Child mortality*	*Maternal mortality*	*HIV/AIDS*	*Malaria*	*Tuberculosis*
Antibiotic therapy	Oral and parenteral therapies for treatment of severe pneumonia				Related to directly observed treatment, short course
Rehydration therapy	Intravenous fluids and oral rehydration substances for treatment of diarrhoea				
Antenatal check-ups (at least four)	Ensures healthy evolution of pregnancy; helps prevent, detect or predict potential complications during pregnancy/childbirth				
Skilled birth attendance	Ensures safe birth delivery and adequate response to complications during childbirth				
Emergency obstetric care	Ensures adequate response in case of obstetric complications during pregnancy and childbirth				
Maternal waiting homes	Potentially reduces neonatal death rates and complications	Increases skilled birth attendance and improves maternal health			
Deliver family planning information and supplies		Ensures universal access to reproductive health; promotion of contraceptive use is critical	Can help to promote condom use and other methods of preventing sexually transmitted infections		
Antiretroviral therapy	Reduces the likelihood of mother-to-child transmission	Effective for treatment and can help to prevent transmission	Effective for treatment and can help to prevent transmission		Reduces the likelihood of developing tuberculosis

Intervention	*Child mortality*	*Maternal mortality*	*HIV/AIDS*	*Malaria*	*Tuberculosis*
Voluntary medical male circumcision			Reduces the likelihood of infection for men		
Pre-exposure antiretroviral prophylaxis			Reduces the likelihood of infection for men who have sex with men and those who inject drugs		
HIV/AIDS awareness programmes			Reduces transmission rates and improves use of health services related to treatment		
Voluntary counselling and testing			Improves awareness about HIV/AIDS status and increases treatment uptake		
Drop-in and wellness centres			Raises HIV awareness status and treatment of hard-to-reach populations	Can aid in treatment of hard-to-reach populations	Can aid in treatment of hard-to-reach populations
Free distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets	Reduces the likelihood of contracting malaria for children	Reduces the likelihood of contracting malaria for pregnant women		Limits (and eliminates) the spread of malaria	
Indoor residual insecticide spraying	Reduces the likelihood of contracting malaria for children	Reduces the likelihood of contracting malaria for pregnant women		Limits (and eliminates) the spread of malaria	

Intervention	*Child mortality*	*Maternal mortality*	*HIV/AIDS*	*Malaria*	*Tuberculosis*
Intermittent preventive therapy in pregnancy	Prevents malaria during pregnancy	Reduces the likelihood of contracting malaria for pregnant women			
Rapid treatment of fevers in young children including rapid diagnostic tests	Reduces the likelihood of contracting malaria for children; reduces the rates of overprescription			Reduces the likelihood of contracting malaria for children; reduces the rates of overprescription	
Artemisinin-based combination therapies				First-line treatment for uncomplicated *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria	
Directly observed treatment, short course					Helps detect cases and stops tuberculosis

Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, based on a survey of studies presented in Marco Sánchez, Alex Julca and John Winkel, "Social policies in the MDG period: lessons and implications for post-2015", background paper prepared for *World Economic and Social Survey 2014/2015* (2015).

A particular development during the MDG period was the emergence of several "vertical" global health funds, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. They often set up their own implementation mechanisms, separate from the national health systems of developing countries. These funds played an important role in the progress made with regard to MDGs 4 and 6. However, in some cases they also exerted adverse effects on the national health systems by imposing priorities, introducing fragmentation and diverting talent and resources. The vertical funds themselves recognized some of these unwarranted effects and tried to rectify them in later years by earmarking part of the funds for the strengthening of national health systems. It is important to have robust national health systems, which can integrate and harmonize the vertical interventions.

Many lessons emerging from the MDG experience with respect to the health goals are similar to those noted above with regard to the education goal. For example, further reduction in child and maternal mortality in many countries requires a reaching out to segments of the population that are more difficult to reach, thus necessitating different types of measures and approaches. Attention has to be given not only to building health-care facilities but also to ensuring an adequate transportation infrastructure so that the target population can reach those facilities easily. Similarly, overcoming social and religious barriers which prevent people from making use of health interventions may become more important in some countries. Also, further progress in reduction of child and maternal mortality often requires more sophisticated health interventions, demanding additional resources.

Construction of health facilities does not always suffice unless the quality of care can be assured. This requires adequacy in terms of health-care personnel, who work efficiently and with dedication. In the long run, it will be necessary to establish more institutions of medical education, which train doctors, nurses and technicians. In the short run, various on-the-job training courses have proved useful. On the other hand, emigration of health-care personnel has been an important problem for many developing countries, which must be dealt with through the provision of adequate compensation and opportunities at home.

Overall, health systems need to provide people-centred solutions and become part of the core social institutions, and deeply embedded thereby in national and local settings.

Lessons regarding environmental policies

A number of environment-related international conventions had already been signed before the MDGs were launched, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[2] the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat,[3], the Convention on Biological Diversity,[4] the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in

[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.
[3] Ibid., vol. 996, No. 14583.
[4] Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.

Africa,[5] the Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses[6] and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.[7] The environmental targets included in MDG 7 relied to a large extent on the outcomes associated with, and the operation of, these conventions, and the same reliance is expected with respect to the targets of the SDGs.

Protecting the atmosphere to combat climate change

With regard to climate change, MDG 7 relied on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which had already led to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.[8] The Kyoto Protocol, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its third session,[9] on 11 December 1997, required industrialized countries to reduce by 2012 their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions on average by about 12 per cent relative to the levels of 1990. Lack of implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and the rapid rise of greenhouse gas emissions of many fast-growing developing countries have caused the total volume of global greenhouse gas emissions now to be almost double that of 1990 (see figure O.5). If the current trends persist, reaching the goal of limiting the global temperature increase to 2 degrees Celsius, as agreed at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in 2009,[10] will no longer be possible.

[5] Ibid., vol. 1954, No. 33480.

[6] See General Assembly resolution 51/229, annex.

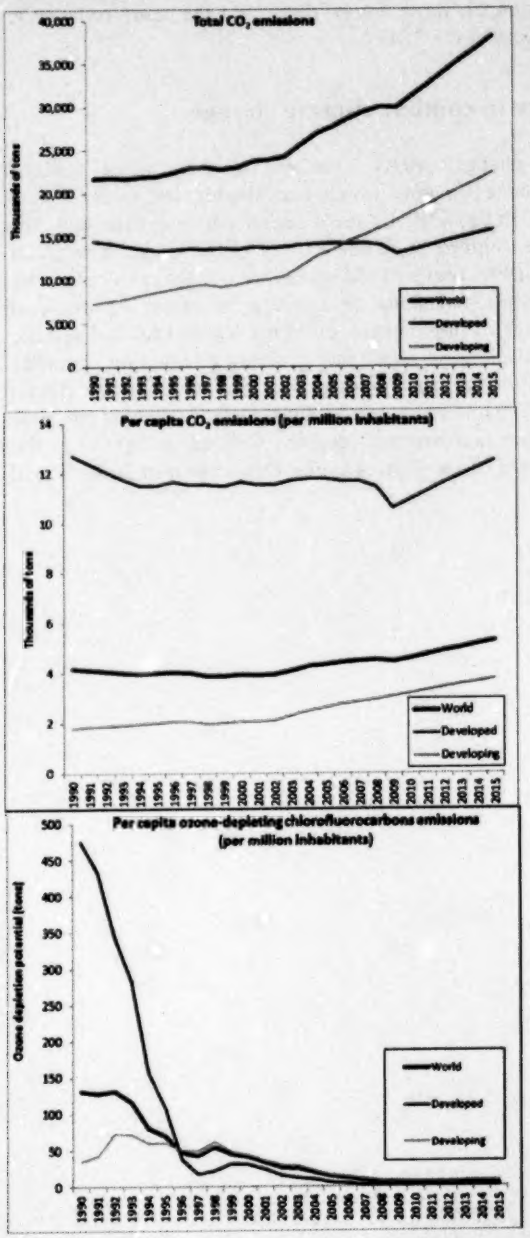
[7] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1833, No. 31363.

[8] Ibid., vol. 2303, No. 30822.

[9] See FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3.

[10] See the Copenhagen Accord (FCCC/CP/2009/11/Add.1, decision 2/CP.15).

Figure O.5
Indicators pertaining to atmosphere-related MDG targets (MDG-7 indicators 7.2 and 7.3), 1990-2015



Source: UN/DESA, based on data from the Statistics Division; and the United States Department of Energy Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center (see http://cdiac.ornl.gov/).

All-out efforts are needed, in general, to make the Framework Convention process a success and, in particular, to ensure that at the upcoming twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in Paris in December 2015, a binding agreement is reached on the greenhouse gas emissions reduction that is necessary to limit the global temperature rise to the previously agreed 2° Celsius mark. Such an agreement will generate the signals needed for Governments, businesses and consumers to adjust their long-term commitment and course of action. It is also important to press ahead with all regional, national, subnational and community- and individual-level efforts towards mitigation and adaptation.

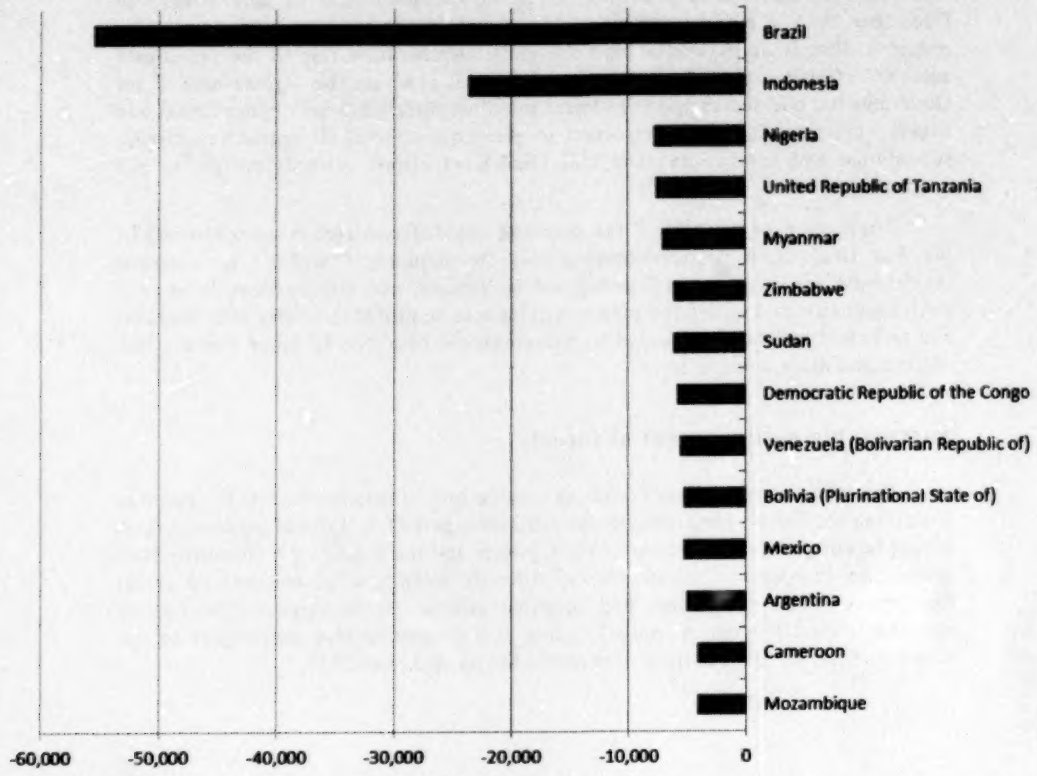
Application of principle 7 (on common but differentiated responsibilities) of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development[11] will be an essential requirement for reaching an international agreement, and will need to be upheld. Both adaptation and mitigation efforts will have to be global in scope, with financial and technical assistance provided by more capable countries to those that are less capable and more vulnerable.

Sustainable management of forests

The MDG period witnessed a considerable loss of primary forests in countries containing the Earth's remaining rainforests (see figure O.6). Loss of primary forests cannot be compensated, in terms of their quality and the degree of biodiversity they sustain, by low-quality forests created through, inter alia, plantation and social forestry. As deforestation has had negative effects on the three dimensions of sustainable development, a more balanced and comprehensive assessment of the benefits of forests in those three dimensions are needed post-2015.

[11] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1991*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

Figure O.6
Countries with the largest forest-area loss, 1990-2010



Sources: Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Millennium Development Goals Indicators website (mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Default.aspx) (2014); and Laszlo Pinter, Dora Almassy and Livia Bizikova, "MDG experience regarding land-related environmental issues and the lessons for implementation of the post-2015 agenda", background paper prepared for *World Economic and Social Survey 2014/2015*.

Major drivers of deforestation in developing countries were population pressure, poverty-generated fuel needs, urbanization and logging by domestic and international companies for the purpose of timber extraction and plantation of various commercial crops. In particular, deforestation was to a large extent driven by global demand for beef, soya, biofuels and tropical timber. Efforts towards protection of forests have to be combined post-2015 with efforts towards sustainable consumption in both developed and developing countries.

The MDG experience also shows that protection of forests requires strengthening of the rights and participation of the indigenous peoples who live in the forests.

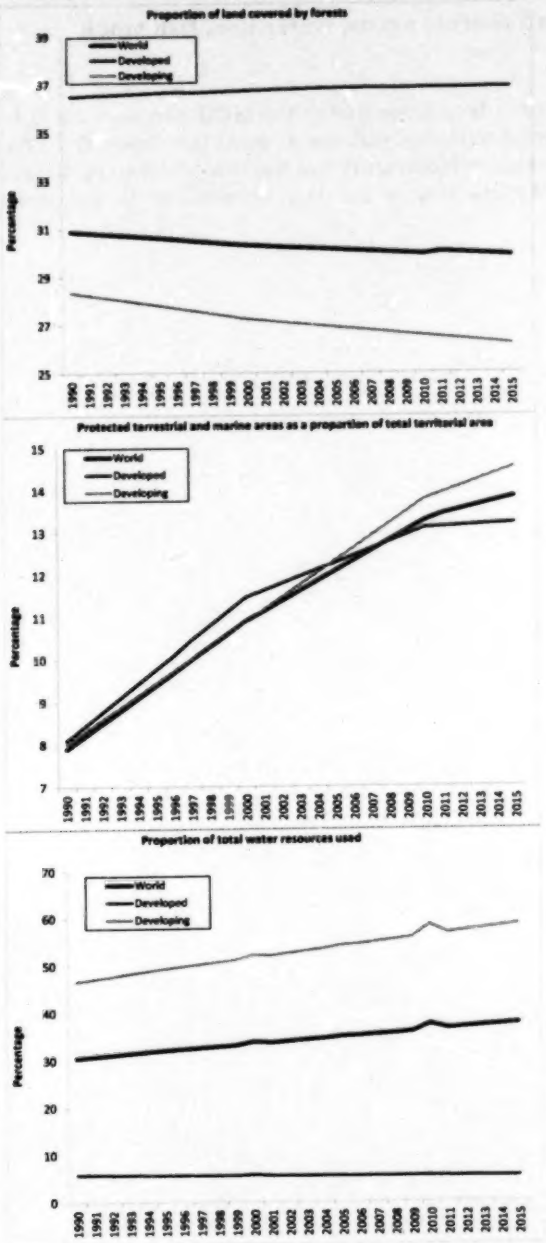
The emergence of several global initiatives and funds and of bilateral development assistance directed towards protection of forests in recipient countries

reflects the growing awareness that such protection is the responsibility not only of the countries in which those forests are located but of the entire world community. Many such initiatives will be required post-2015.

Protecting terrestrial and marine areas, water use, fish stock and biodiversity

Although some progress has been made during the MDG period in formally increasing the extent of protected terrestrial and marine areas (see figure O.7), the situation has worsened with regard to biodiversity and freshwater resources. Urgent steps will be needed post-2015 to reverse the loss of biodiversity and those resources.

Figure O.7
Indicators (MDG 7 indicators 7.1, 7.5 and 7.6) pertaining to land-, water- and biodiversity-related targets, based on available data at the national level, for developed and developing countries, 1990-2015



(Footnotes on following page)

(Footnotes to Figure O.7)

Source: UN/DESA, based on data from the Statistics Division.
Note: Country proportion is weighted by country surface. Linear interpolation and projection were used for filling in missing data.

The mutual interactions between MDG 7 and the environment-related conventions proved fruitful with regard to protection of terrestrial and marine areas. While MDG 7 encouraged the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to adopt the Aichi Biodiversity Targets,[12] those same Targets were subsequently included in MDG 7 as well. This type of mutual interaction will also be important post-2015. Further, the experience with Aichi targets demonstrated that concrete quantitative targets do prompt countries to act, thereby indicating the importance of setting specific quantitative targets for the period post-2015.

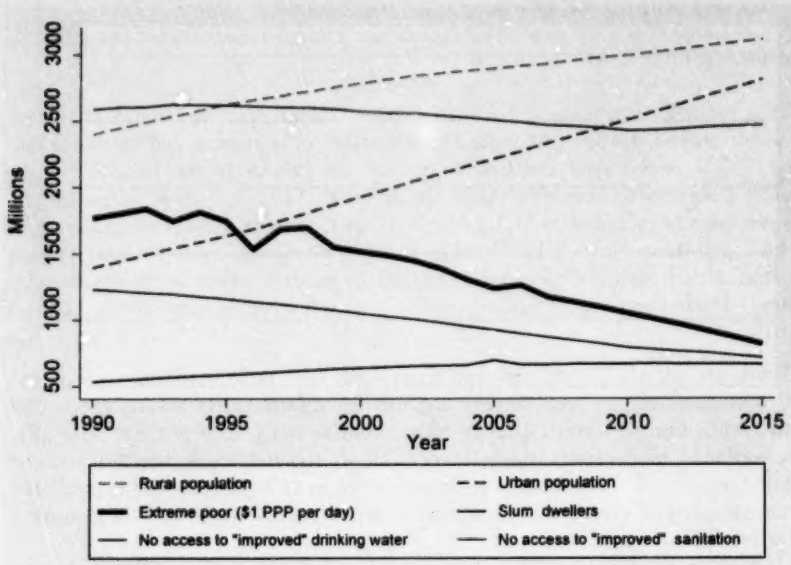
There are certain targets that are composite, that is to say, they encompass several individual targets and thereby capture the interlinkages among them. For example, protection of terrestrial areas can simultaneously help protect, inter alia, forests, wetlands, biodiversity, freshwater resources and fish stock. Identification of composite targets and indicators will be important post-2015 both for maintaining the dimensionality of targets and indicators at a manageable level and for capturing the interlinkages among them.

Improving drinking water, sanitation and slums

MDG 7 put targets concerning access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation facilities and improvement of the life of slum dwellers (familiarly known as the WASH targets) together with environmental targets. However, the WASH targets, as formulated, lacked precision, which led to the use of indicators that in some cases overstated the progress achieved. The target regarding slums (entailing an improvement in the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020) was formulated in such a way — as to lead to a paradoxical situation, where the target will have been achieved while the total number of slum dwellers will have increased to about 1 billion (figure O.8).

[12] See United Nations Environment Programme, document UNEP/CBD/COP/10/27, annex, decision X/2.

Figure O.8
Population (rural and urban), poverty, slum dwellers and people without improved drinking water and sanitation during 1990-2015



Source: Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, based on data from the official MDG database and from the Population Division of the United Nations Secretariat.

Abbreviation: PPP, purchasing power parity.

Note: Data cover developing countries only. While data on slum dwellers cover 87 developing countries, 28 countries have only a single observation. According to higher estimates by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (2013), the number of slum dwellers increased from 650 million in 1990 to 862 million in 2012 and is rising further.

For urban areas, use of city-wide systems of piped water supply may be an efficient method of ensuring sustainable access to safe drinking water. Similarly, use of city-wide piped sewerage systems may be an efficient method of ensuring hygienic sanitation in urban areas. The city-wide drinking water and sanitation infrastructure can best be built through public initiatives, complemented by various community and non-governmental initiatives. In supplying drinking water for urban dwellers, attention must be paid to the sustainability of the water source, with renewable surface-water sources being preferable to groundwater sources having limited renewability. Also, discharge of untreated sewage into water bodies needs to be prevented. Technologies that can convert sewage into clean potable water need to be made affordable and promoted widely.

As the slum problem is rooted in basic socioeconomic processes, the long-run solution has to be sought in sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth, in sustainable urbanization, and in a universal social protection arrangement, as discussed earlier. However, some intermediate steps towards improvement of the life of slum dwellers may be taken, including granting of tenure rights, where possible; provision of microfinancing services; increasing access to public services

related to health and education; and increasing the scope for training and job opportunities. A shallow, superficial view of the slum problem and the corresponding mechanical, unsustainable and often cruel solutions must be avoided.

These lessons will be particularly useful in consideration of strategies for implementing SDG 11, which calls for making "cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable".

Overall lessons for environmental policymaking

The MDGs relied largely on environment-related conventions under the aegis of the United Nations for the determination and implementation of environmental targets. The SDGs also appear to follow this model. Greater efforts are therefore needed to ensure the success of those conventions. It is also necessary to explore and profit from the advantages offered by joint approaches to achieving environmental and economic and social development goals.

Going forward, policies need to make better use of the interconnections both among various environmental goals and between environmental goals, on the one hand, and human development goals, on the other. For example, conditional cash transfers, such as payment for environmental protection services, can both raise income and protect the environment. The distributional issues associated with such programmes need, however, to be taken into account.

Public initiatives can play a crucial role in enabling achievement of environmental and WASH-related goals. Market-based methods may not work as anticipated because of externalities, monopoly (by vested interests) and incomplete information, as well as other institutional deficiencies. In such situations, direct regulatory methods combined with efforts to improve market function can work better. A key role in achieving environmental sustainability belongs to technology. However, public policies and initiatives will also be important in the generation and dissemination of the technologies necessary for achieving climate and other environmental goals.

Solving environmental problems cannot and should not be the business of Governments alone, either nationally or internationally. The scope and role of multi-stakeholder effort at both international and national levels for solving environmental problems will increase post-2015. The growing business sector that is producing pro-environment goods and service can become a major force for protection of the environment. In addition, businesses operating in all other sectors must be made aware that it is in their long-term interest to align their business models with global environmental goals.

Lessons regarding governance, institutions, and peace and stability

Good governance, effective institutions, peace and stability and development are interconnected. Specific forms of governance practices vary widely across countries. This *Survey* focuses on several practical aspects of governance and institutions that proved critical for achieving the MDGs.

Accountable political leadership

Accountable political leadership can offer a vision, set the right agenda, inspire people, mobilize resources, and forge inclusive partnerships — all of which are necessary for implementing that agenda. Such leadership can ensure policy coordination and coherence at all levels of government and broaden voice, increase participation, strengthen unity and promote social cohesion, peace and stability.

Policy coordination and quality of civil administration

Effective policy coordination, between and among different levels of government and various development actors is critical for achieving development results. Formulation of national development strategies, national visions and plans, and poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) can contribute to improving policy coordination across different ministries and agencies of the government.

Improving incentive structures, through linkage of pay and other benefits of civil servants to performance and development outcomes, can be important for strengthening capacities of public administration and reducing corruption. More extensive use of information and communications technologies (ICT) and effective e-government platforms can reduce corruption and improve coordination, policy coherence and administrative capacity. E-governments can also enhance policy coordination through social inclusion, particularly of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

Decentralization

MDG experience shows that decentralization of decision-making, empowerment of communities and promotion of greater local-level accountability can improve the quality of delivery of services. However, decentralization needs to be accompanied by a process of participatory planning, so that development outcomes can be more inclusive and equitable. Decentralization will become more effective when it is not only political or administrative but also fiscal, ensuring that local governments and communities have more control over financial resources.

Better planning and administrative capacity among local government officials and improved public financial management can help prevent inefficiencies, duplication, wasteful use of scarce resources and corruption in local governments. The post-2015 SDGs will require a renewed focus on decentralization with a view to strengthening the capacities of local governments to deliver the services necessary for sustainable development along its three dimensions.

Partnerships at national and subnational levels

Non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and private sector entities can play an increasingly important role in development, complementing the efforts of the government at all levels (see below for a discussion of global partnerships). While they can enhance voice, citizen engagement and accountability, non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations are particularly

effective in improving the quantity and quality of basic services in health and education and for the empowerment of women and in reaching underserved and marginalized communities. Public-private partnerships can also play an important role in closing the gaps in service delivery, particularly in the education sector. Partnerships with non-governmental actors are more effective when they are well coordinated within an overarching development framework that can prevent duplication of efforts.

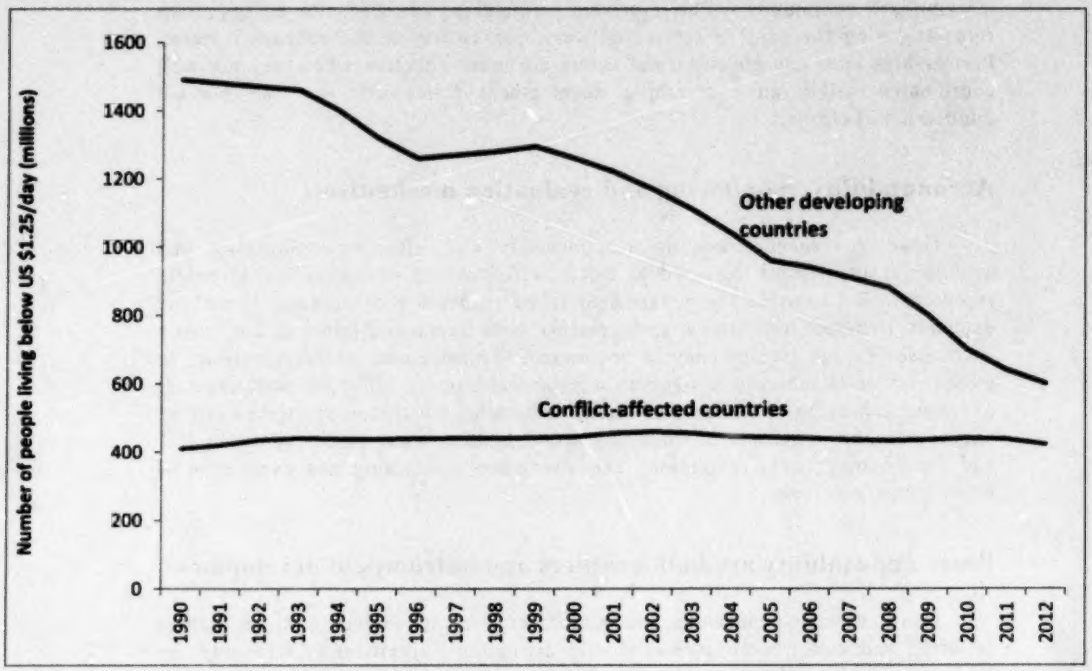
Accountability, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

Good governance requires accountability and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms designed to ensure efficient and equitable use of public resources and to enable the government to be responsive to citizens' needs and demands. Different institutional arrangements, both formal and informal, can ensure accountability and transparency in governance. Enhancement of accountability in public service is achieved through an incremental process. Effective parliamentary oversight and empowered supreme audit institutions, which can strengthen citizen engagement, are important in enhancing accountability, while extensive use of ICT and the ongoing "data revolution" can strengthen monitoring and evaluation of development outcomes.

Peace and stability are both enablers and outcomes of development

Conflict exacts enormous and multifaceted costs, including direct human suffering and catastrophic socioeconomic disruptions, significantly impeding the achievement of the MDGs and other development goals. For instance, there has been a wide divergence in poverty reduction between conflict-affected countries and others (figure O.9). The conflict-affected countries are lagging behind according to almost every MDG indicator. They account for nearly 80 per cent of school-age children who are not enrolled in primary school, 60 per cent of the people living in poverty and 70 per cent of infant mortality.

Figure O.9
Poverty: conflict-affected versus other developing countries, 1990-2012



Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Fragile states 2014: domestic revenue mobilisation in fragile states" (Paris, 2014), p. 19, figure 1.2.

Economic, social and environmental stresses are often among the root causes of violence and conflict, along with other factors such as injustice based on ethnic and religious identity, human rights violations, external invasions and the infiltration of international terrorist and criminal networks. Economic stresses such as high unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, as well as food and energy price shocks, can significantly increase the risk of violence. Social stresses, including high inequality in terms of both opportunity and income, are also among the causes of conflict. Further, close links have been found between conflicts and environmental stresses, which can cause or amplify conflicts directly, or indirectly through their effects in terms of population displacement, poverty and infectious diseases.

Building a virtuous cycle between peace and sustainable development

For conflict-affected countries, the achievement of development goals depends first and foremost on restoring peace and stability, followed by the required building of legitimate institutions and good governance to enable the transition to lasting peace, stability, justice and prosperity.

Restoring confidence in the political process and the governance system, through the building of sufficiently inclusive coalitions, is critical in the initial phase of transition. Afterwards, institutions need to be transformed so as to be able to deliver stability, justice, basic services and jobs. Practical measures include investing in basic infrastructure, channelling public finance towards employment creation in labour-intensive sectors, promoting private businesses through various reforms, and empowering women through provision of greater economic opportunities.

Lessons from cases of both success and failure show that good governance and effective institutions cannot simply be imported from other countries, although experience can be shared across countries. Instead, effective institutions can be built only in accordance with country-specific circumstances through a long and gradual process.

While national efforts are the key, the efforts by the international community can also play a catalytic role in restoration of peace and in post-conflict transition. International support — through international and regional organizations and bilateral arrangements — to conflict-affected countries has increased during the MDG period in the areas of building coalitions, transforming institutions and mitigating external stresses, including cross-border insecurity, illegal trafficking, transnational corruption and illicit international financial flows. Greater international policy coordination and coherence will be needed to ensure peace and build effective institutions in post-conflict countries.

Lessons regarding global partnerships for development

Delivering on MDG 8

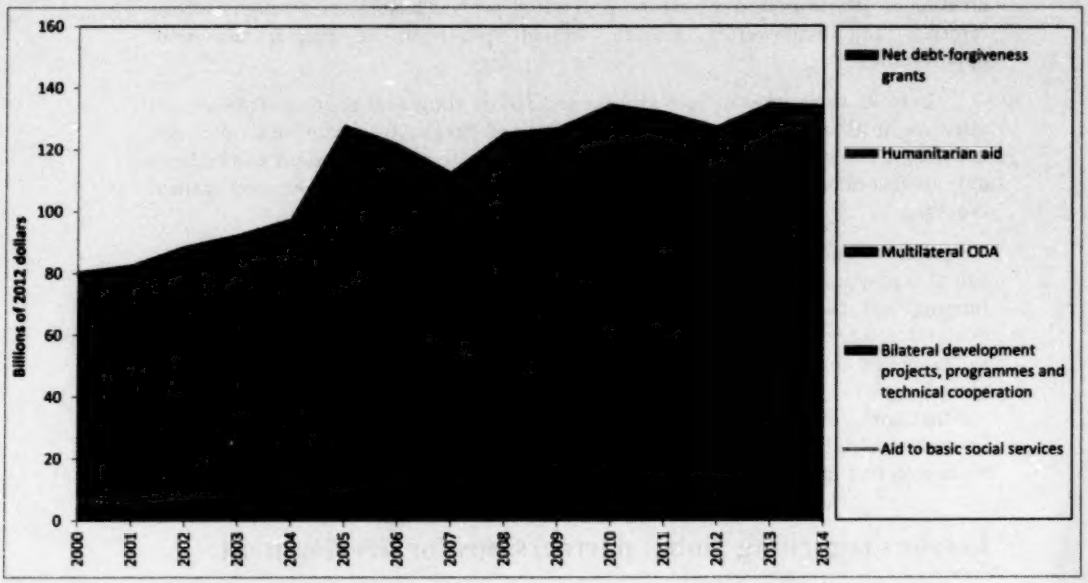
MDG 8 was set to "develop a global partnership for development", and to attain targets covering five areas: ODA, market access (trade), debt sustainability, access to affordable essential medicines, and access to new technologies. In the MDG period, an increasing number of policy steps were taken by the international community to strengthen the global partnership for development as defined in MDG 8, including the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development,[13] adopted by the Conference in Monterrey, Mexico, on 22 March 2002, and establishment of the inter-agency MDG Gap Task Force in 2007 to monitor and report annually on progress on MDG 8.

During the MDG period, ODA flows increased from $84 billion in 2000 to more than $135.2 billion in 2014 (figure O.10). Among the then 28 members of the Development Assistance Committee, Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland met the United Nations target of providing as ODA 0.7 per cent of their gross national income (GNI) by 2013 demonstrating that this target is indeed feasible. ODA per capita to low-income countries increased significantly during the MDG period, from $16 per capita in 2000 to nearly $52 in 2014. ODA will remain important post-2015, as it

[13] *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

still constitutes over 70 per cent of total external financing in least developed countries.

Figure O.10
Main components of ODA of Development Assistance Committee members, 2000-2013



Source. UN/DESA, based on OECD/DAC data.

The average tariff applied by developed countries to exports of developing countries has decreased notably, but tariff peaks and tariff escalation remain two impediments to developing countries' access to the markets of developed countries. Despite the adoption of the Bali agreements during the Ninth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization under the Doha Round of World Trade Organization negotiations, held in Bali, Indonesia, from 3 to 6 December 2013, including the call for expeditious improvement of duty- and quota-free coverage, challenges still remain post-2015 for the implementation of these agreements and the completion of the Doha Round.

Debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative has alleviated debt burdens in a large number of countries, proving to be useful in the reallocation of resources in these countries to poverty reduction. However, several HIPC countries are once again approaching moderate or high levels of debt distress.

Progress has been made in combating both non-communicable and acute diseases, through more coordination in implementing coherent national policies aligned to global agreements. Further efforts are needed, however, to make essential medicines more available and affordable in developing countries.

Access to advanced technologies in developing countries has been growing at a fast pace during the MDG period, particularly in ICT. More efforts are needed to

further narrow the gaps in access to advanced technologies between developed and developing countries. Access to know-how for reducing disaster risks along with effective mobilization of data and information can strengthen countries' resilience. The developing and sharing of geospatial information have proved to be important in disaster risk reduction and sustainable development.

Emergence of other partnerships for development cooperation

In addition to the partnership focused on MDG 8, other types of global partnerships emerged and contributed to the achievement of the MDGs. Some of these partnerships involve multi-stakeholders, including Governments, multilateral and regional institutions, foundations, civil society organizations and for-profit enterprises.

Partnerships for South-South development cooperation have become increasingly important for promoting trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) flows among developing countries. The financial flows associated with South-South partnerships have increased markedly. International organizations, including United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, have increased their support for South-South development partnerships and in many cases, have formed triangular development partnerships.

The Secretary-General has undertaken a number of multi-stakeholder partnership initiatives in recent years to mobilize additional resources for and actions on some specific MDG targets. These include the Every Woman Every Child movement, the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, the Global Education First Initiative, the Zero Hunger Challenge, the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, and the Call to Action on Sanitation.

In addition, private organizations also provide concessional financing. In 2012, total net private grants from non-governmental organizations and other private voluntary agencies amounted to $29.8 billion.

Challenges for global partnerships post-2015

The proposed SDG 17 has delineated a number of key elements of the global partnership for sustainable development in the areas of finance, technology, capacity-building, trade, and systemic issues, suggesting that the global partnership for sustainable development should be complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Going forward, global partnerships face a number of challenges, a few of which are noted directly below.

In addition to fulfilment by developed countries of the target of 0.7 per cent of GNI as ODA to developing countries, with 0.15-0.20 per cent going to least developed countries, there needs to be more strategic allocation of ODA so that the priorities of eradicating extreme poverty and putting the world on a sustainable development path are met simultaneously.

Besides the need for further increasing duty-free and quota-free market access for least developed countries and concluding a balanced Doha Round of World

Trade Organization negotiation, there is a need to enhance consistency between trade policy, on the one hand, and the economic, social and environmental policies, on the other, at both national and global levels.

Current rules and conditions regarding illicit flows and tax avoidance often constrain the efforts of Governments in developing countries to raise domestic revenue. There have been initiatives undertaken to better align taxing rights with value creation and real economic activity, as well as efforts to improve transparency and strengthen the national and international regulatory frameworks, aimed at encouraging responsible corporate and banking practices. Post-2015, reforms of the international framework for tax cooperation should entail properly assessing and addressing their distributional impacts on developing countries.

Migration can be a transformative force, offering opportunities for millions of people to work their way out of poverty and contribute to the development of countries of origin and of destination alike. For migration to fully achieve its development potential in a sustainable, equitable and inclusive manner, the human rights of migrants must be protected. This requires ensuring that migrants and their families have equal access to employment and social protection, as well as to the highest attainable standards of health and education, regardless of their migration status. Greater international cooperation is also needed to eliminate human trafficking.

The human impact on the planet's ecosystems has reached the point where the long-term prospects of sustainable development are being threatened. There has been greater recognition of the need for global efforts to confront global environmental problems, while respecting the aforementioned principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. For example, developed countries have committed to mobilizing $100 billion per year for climate change-related purposes alone by 2020 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, although the past performance in this regard has not been all that encouraging. A good example of multi-stakeholder partnerships in this area is the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, launched by the Secretary-General in 2011, which is aimed at making sustainable energy available for all a reality by 2030. However, it is necessary to scale up funding and actions and broaden the scope of all types of global partnerships.

Lessons on data development

The MDGs led to significant progress in data development and reporting, and hence in monitoring. Monitoring the 21 targets and 60 indicators under the MDGs required a huge improvement effort directed at data development and reporting.

Statistical challenges posed by the post-2015 development agenda are likely to be huge. With 17 goals and 169 targets, SDGs increase the dimensionality of required data by a significant order of magnitude. Since SDGs will involve more customization at the national level, there will be the greater challenge of allowing variation at the national level while preserving the required comparability across nations and aggregation at the global level. Post-2015 will also be characterized by a tremendous increase in data supply, including real-time data. How to make use of this increased availability and harness those data to ensure that they complement official data will be a big challenge. The post-2015 development agenda, with the

SDGs at its core, will require proper valuation of environmental capital and integration of national income accounts with environmental accounts. The initial progress in this regard at the United Nations through the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting will need to be accelerated and the outcomes of this process implemented by all Member States.

The advances in data development and reporting achieved during the MDG period provide a sound foundation for confrontation of these challenges by the world community.

Upholding the MDG spirit

The world has at its disposal the technology and resources necessary to eradicate poverty and embark on a sustainable development path. The most important MDG lesson is that it is possible for sociopolitical obstacles to be overcome and for all nations, and for groups within nations, to join together and work towards common development goals. This lesson encapsulates the MDG spirit, and it is this spirit that will have to be upheld and strengthened in the coming years if the SDGs and, more broadly, the post-2015 development agenda, are to be implemented successfully.